

Senate will proceed to a period of morning business for 60 minutes, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming is recognized.

56TH ANNUAL NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, in light of the fact that a few minutes ago we opened the Senate in prayer, I want to say that last month I had the privilege of cochairing with the Senator from Colorado, Senator SALAZAR, the 56th Annual National Prayer Breakfast, held here in our Nation's Capital. This annual gathering is hosted by Members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, who have weekly prayer breakfast groups. Once again, we were honored to have the 56th consecutive participation of our President and the First Lady. Presidents since Dwight Eisenhower have spoken at the annual prayer breakfast. We were encouraged and inspired by the remarks shared by Ward Brehm. Unfortunately, a transcript doesn't give the superb pauses and delivery that we who attended got to enjoy, but it is a superb message I want to share.

This year, we hosted a gathering of over 3,500 individuals from all walks of life in all 50 States and from many countries around the world. So that all may benefit from this time together, on behalf of the Congressional Committee for the National Prayer Breakfast, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the transcript of the 2008 proceedings be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at the conclusion of my speech.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See Exhibit 1.)

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, this is an example of what we do in our weekly prayer breakfast, with little exception, and the presenters at our weekly prayer breakfast are always Senators or former Senators. It is a chance for us to get to know each person in this body as they present.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

56TH NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST,
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2008,
HILTON WASHINGTON HOTEL,
WASHINGTON, DC

Co-Chairs: U.S. Senator Mike Enzi and U.S. Senator Ken Salazar

U.S. Senator Mike Enzi: I would bet that some of you are wondering, "How did I get here?" and "What kind of an outfit is this?" We will try to explain a little bit. Ken and I are part of a very small breakfast group made up entirely of Senators that has met every Wednesday that the Senate has been in session since the middle part of the Truman

administration. That was in the late 1940's. We share with each other, we eat, we pray and we discuss things that really matter.

I am reminded of a time I was in South Africa meeting with their parliament for a breakfast and I suggested that our Senate prayer breakfast could pray for their issues. A parliamentarian named Paul brought me up short and said, "Don't pray for the issues, pray for the people and the people will solve the issues." And that is what we do at our weekly prayer breakfast. That is what we will be doing here.

Now once a year we hold our weekly meeting in a slightly bigger room and we invite 4,000 people from around the world to come along for the ride. Welcome to our prayer breakfast. (Applause)

U.S. Senator Ken Salazar: We count it a privilege to serve in the United States Senate but frankly it is not always an easy job. President Truman once said that if you want to have a friend in Washington, buy a dog. We see that all the time. Our breakfast in the U.S. Senate is an attempt to put back into all of us what the job takes out from all of us and gives us a reason to have trusting relationships, to find wisdom and to reconcile our differences.

For me, I don't need to buy a dog in Washington, D.C. because I have a friend named Mike Enzi. (Laughter) Mike Enzi brings his common sense, compassion and approach to the issues that face our nation and it makes him a key leader in the United States Senate. That helps us get to results by putting the public purpose above the politics which sometimes so confines this town.

Washington, in my view, does not need a lot more speeches. It needs people who need to seek and listen and to understand. More people like Mike and his wife Diana, who is here with us this morning. It has been my honor and pleasure to serve with Mike Enzi for the last three years in the U.S. Senate.

Senator Enzi: I have enjoyed getting to know Ken and the deep wealth of heritage and caring that he brings to the Senate. His family has lived in Colorado for 150 years—longer than there has been a Colorado. Our connection began personally and now we are able to talk about things that Republicans and Democrats do not talk about together. And what do you know? We have figured some things out. We are a couple of guys from the high plains, Colorado and Wyoming, who are trying to keep things on a higher plane in our jobs. We have been working on this breakfast for many months now and we hope you enjoy it. A lot of prayer has gone into it and we hope it somehow scratches where you itch.

One special note, folks, Dr. Billy Graham attended the Breakfast and was the main speaker for the first few years. He sent a special word to us last night that he would be with us in spirit this morning and is praying for us at this very moment from his home in North Carolina. Thank you for your prayers and a lifetime of spiritual leadership, Billy. (Applause)

Senator Salazar: 155 nations are represented here this morning in Washington, D.C. I now want to introduce to all of you the distinguished heads of state who have joined us from other lands today: The Chairman of the Council of the Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Prime Minister Nicola Spiric; The President of the Republic of Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza; The President of the Republic of El Salvador, Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez, and the First Lady; The President of the Republic of Honduras, Jose Manuel Zelaya Rosales; The President of the Federated States of Micronesia, Immanuel Mori; and The Prime Minister of the Independent State of Samoa, Prime Minister Tuila'epa Lupefeso Sialele Malielegaoi. (Applause)

You are all most welcome. Thank you for giving that warm welcome to our guests here to the United States of America. We live with human borders but we are one family across the face of the earth. Thank you for the honor of your presence and the chance to get to know you as friends and fellow travelers in search of truth and a better world.

Senator Enzi: When one of our members heard that our singer was Michael W. Smith he said, "Well that's worth getting out of bed early for." Michael is here with his wife, Debbie, this morning. He has been recording faithful music for more than two decades and won countless awards but he does not want the focus to be on him. He has always encouraged his fans, young and old, that faith is not a spectator sport. He has encouraged tens of thousands to sponsor children all over the world. We are happy to have two selections from him this morning. The first is "Above All."

Mr. Michael W. Smith: (sings) ["Above all powers above all kings"] (Applause)

Senator Enzi: Oh, how faith shines. Thank you, Michael. Everybody in life needs role models, including Senators. Senator Dianne Feinstein is that for many of the new members of the Senate. She personifies dignity and excellence in doing the people's work. She did that as the Mayor of San Francisco and she is certainly doing that in the Senate. To present a reading, our friend and colleague, Senator Dianne Feinstein of California.

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein: Thank you very much Senator Enzi. Mr. President, Mrs. Bush, ladies and gentlemen.

Religion is a very personal thing to me. I have been privileged to draw on two of the world's great religions—one being Judaism, and the other, Catholicism. I went to a Catholic convent while I was going to a Jewish Sunday school. Some people would say that left me very confused. But nonetheless it was a very special experience. A very young rabbi wrote what I am going to read. It is now part of Reformed Judaism's prayer book and is used in the High Holy Day services. I would like to share it with you.

"Birth is a beginning, and death a destination and life is a journey: From childhood to maturity, and youth to age. From innocence to awareness, and ignorance to knowing. From foolishness to discretion and then perhaps to wisdom. From weakness to strength or strength to weakness and often back again. From health to sickness and back we pray to health again. From offense to forgiveness. From loneliness to love. From joy to gratitude. From pain to compassion and grief to understanding. From fear to faith. From defeat to defeat, to defeat until looking backward or ahead we see that victory lies not at some high place along the way but in having made the journey stage by stage a sacred pilgrimage. Birth is a beginning and death a destination and life is a journey, a sacred pilgrimage to life everlasting."

Thank you. (Applause)

U.S. Representative Bart Stupak: I am Bart Stupak, co-chair of the House Prayer Breakfast. In my sixteen years in the house this is the second time that I have had the honor to address you from the dais. Some things never change—the National Prayer Breakfast remains heavy on prayer and light on breakfast. (Laughter) As we join in fellowship, filled with the Holy Spirit, I ask that you remember two House members who were devoted to the Prayer Breakfast and who are no longer with us, Congresswoman Jo Ann Davis and Congresswoman Julia Carson. We miss them. Now let me turn the podium over to my co-chair, friend and colleague, Gresham Barrett of South Carolina.

U.S. Representative J. Gresham Barrett: Good morning. Two things—number one, we

will not take up a love offering today and number two, we are here to feed your soul. If you want to feed the body with ham and grits and eggs we are going to the Waffle House after this, OK? I do concur with Bart on that. It is an honor to be here. Bart told me that being from South Carolina I tend to speak a little bit slowly, but if I speak any slower it will take all day so I will speed up just a little bit.

I want to tell you a little bit about what we do in the House during our Prayer Breakfast. It is a bi-partisan meeting. We meet every Thursday at 8 o'clock. We talk amongst ourselves with fellowship, with food, with laughter. We pray for one another, we pray for folks that we don't know. It is open to members and former members, sometimes we have foreign dignitaries. But the biggest thing of all is to be an encouragement to each other. That is a little bit about how we do it. The question is "Why do we do it?" And I can sum it up the best in Paul's letter to the Corinthians. I Corinthians 13:13: "And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest is love." We meet together because we love each other, we love our families, we love what we do, we love this nation and I believe that the one thing we can do that is stronger than anything is to love. If you don't take anything away from this Prayer Breakfast this morning, remember this: someone in this room loves you. And more important than that, someone up above has given us the greatest gift of love. Thank you for being here this morning and have a blessed day.

Senator Salazar: Thank you, Congressman Stupak and Congressman Barrett. Part of what we try and celebrate here as well is our nation's government and to pray for our nation's government. Certainly the judiciary is very much a part of our government and our democracy. This morning I am honored to introduce my great friend and one of the most distinguished jurists in the United States of America, the Honorable Judge Carlos Lucero of the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Lucero practiced law in my native, beautiful San Luis Valley in Colorado and like my family Judge Lucero's family helped found the city of Santa Fe, New Mexico, the city of Holy Faith, back in 1598. For the last 12 years he has served with distinction on the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. To lead us in prayer for our national leaders help me welcome Judge Carlos Lucero.

The Honorable Carlos E. Lucero: Good morning, Mr. President and Mrs. Bush. As Ken says, our families go way back and these early pioneers were sustained in their travels to what was to them the new world by this deep abiding faith and great sense of belief and commitment. Some of my earliest memories of my grandfather were before there was electrification—his sitting next to a window reading the Bible and caring deeply about his prayer. My parents hauling us children, as I am sure Ken's parents did as well, to go to these early old adobe churches of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico for their Te Deums. And it is really the parents of the United States, the great families who inculcate their children with a belief in God and with a belief in values and in prayer that are the genuine heroes of the United States. Back in the earliest of days the faith of these pioneers carried them. There was an early territorial governor of New Mexico who is said to have prayed at one time, "pobre Nuevo Mexico, poor little New Mexico" he said, "so far from heaven, so close to Texas." (Laughter)

As public officials all of us take the oath of office to support and defend the constitution of the United States. The American history flows back to those images of the President raising his arm and stating his oath. The

rest of us too are required, constitutionally, to take our oath of office or affirmation, the constitution allows both, to support the constitution of the United States. My prayer today relates to seeking God's help in asking that the leaders of our country faithfully discharge our obligations and that we might have the providence of God, the Creator, in aiding us to do so.

Dear God, as each of us may worship you in the many creeds represented here today, my prayer is that you bless our country, our government, the President of the United States and his family, the members of the United States Senate, the United States House of Representatives, the Justices of the United States Supreme Court and the members of the federal judiciary and all of our families. I ask the blessings of God on the governors of the states, the state legislatures and judges, the mayors of our cities, the members of our city councils throughout the United States and all those who serve in public service, most especially on the officers and the men and women of the United States military who serve our beloved country and our beloved constitution so faithfully.

May the Almighty grant us the wisdom and sound judgment to discharge our constitutional oath with the clearest of conscience and that our every action on behalf of the people of the United States be true and loyal and faithful to you and to this document. I pray that the citizens of our country may be blessed with your Spirit and citizens of all races and creeds may forge a common bond in true harmony, to banish hatred and replace it with love, to banish bigotry and replace it with understanding and to safeguard the ideals of free institutions that are the pride and glory of our country and of this world. I pray that this land under your providence may be an influence for good throughout the world, uniting all people in peace and in freedom. I have a very brief reading from the Old Testament today that I would like to conclude my prayer with. One word of explanation in speaking to friends of many denominations in preparing for today's prayer—I learned that in the earliest days of the history of the Old Testament when the tribes went forth, there were no kings or leaders as such but the judges governed, so a rabbi tells me. Don't think that I am getting any ideas. I know those of us in the judiciary know what is buzzed about us but you have to have that understanding to have a deeper understanding of what the Old Testament means as it speaks of judgment because of the special ethics and requirements that were imposed on these earliest leaders. From the book of Deuteronomy chapter 1 verses 15–17:

"So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. And I charged your judges at that time: Hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between one of them and an alien. Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to God."

And from chapter 6 verse 8 of the book of Micah:

"He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Amen.

Senator Enzi: Historically, we have been honored to have a member of the United States military be a part of our leadership of this breakfast and today we go all the way to the top of the chain of command—Admiral

Michael Mullen is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is joined this morning by his wife, Deborah. He was born in Los Angeles, graduated from the Naval Academy and has served our nation all over the world. To present our second reading from the Holy Scriptures, Admiral Michael Mullen.

Admiral Michael Mullen: Mr. President and Mrs. Bush, good morning everyone. It is great to see all of you and join you in worship this morning. I testified before Congress yesterday so believe me I know the value of prayer. (Laughter) The verse I would like to read is from the book of Philipians. It is short, powerful, poetic and concise. It reminds me daily in this time of war and great uncertainty of the things of which we must always remain certain. It speaks to me of the nobility of service to one another, to the nation and to a cause greater than one's self and it calls to mind the sacrifices of those who serve and of the families and loved ones who wait and worry and support those men and women in uniform who serve this noble cause. Philipians 4: 8,9 "... whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, think on these things. Those things, which you have learned, and received, and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." Thank you.

Senator Salazar: I am delighted to introduce my good friend from Minnesota, Senator Amy Klobuchar. Her husband, John Bessler is with her this morning. In her short time as a member of the United States Senate she has become one of the stars of our Senate. With the values of the Iron Range and the sharp mind and tongue of a prosecutor she is the champion of the people of Minnesota. To lead us in prayer for world leaders, Senator Amy Klobuchar.

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar: Thank you, Senator Salazar, President Bush, Mrs. Bush, members of Congress, friends. It is an honor to be here today to share a prayer for our world leaders. Like so many who are gathered here today, my faith came from those before me. Their worlds did not stretch the globe like the leaders for whom we will pray today instead they lived in much simpler, humbler circumstances but they still had the courage to believe. My grandpa worked 1,500 feet underground in the mines in Ely, Minnesota and never graduated from high school but he saved money in a coffee can in the basement to send my dad to college. Up in Iron Range there is a rollicking collision of ethnic cultures from the Slovenians to the Serbs to the Croatians and to the Finns. My grandma and grandpa were Catholic and you could worship up on the range at polka masses held by an entrepreneurial polka priest, named Father Frank Perkovich. He did so well that he has been last heard of as a priest on a Caribbean cruise line. Prayer is needed everywhere. But my faith also comes from my mom who never learned to drive until I was in high school but who was bound and determined to get our family to church. Once a week she would load us into a cab, which was quite a sight in a middle class Minnesota suburb on a Sunday morning, and it was my job to say at the end of the drive to the driver, "add 50 cents please." I would be so nervous that I would forget to say this and deny the driver his tip that the entire way to church I would say in my head, "add 50 cents, please, add 50 cents, please." Today I can never go to church without thinking, "add 50 cents please." That I got from my mom. And, finally, my faith comes from my dad who became a popular newspaper columnist and an avid adventurer. He climbed mountains the world over but his faith was

tested time and time again through his own battle with alcoholism. I watched him climb the highest peaks, but at times slip in the lowest valleys. He finally overcame it when in his own words, he was pursued by grace.

We bow our heads today, God, to pray that our world leaders may also be pursued by grace. God, in the Himalayas of Nepal there is a simple greeting that today we share as a simple blessing for our world leaders. When the Nepalese see a friend they bow their heads and clasp their hands and say, *Namaste*, which in its most spiritual translation means, "I praise the God that lives within you." God, in this time of year when an English poet once described it as the bleak mid-winter, we are experiencing world events that too often match that somber description. We pray that when our world leaders are confronted by religion used to divide us, they will find the God that lives within them to guide them to common ground in peace. God, we pray that our leaders find the God that lives within them to work together across borders to cure disease, confront hunger and poverty and offer hope to the children of the world. God, as the icebergs melt and the seas flood we ask that our world leaders listen to you and answer our call to care for your creation, to treasure the changing of the seasons and to remember the philosophy of the Ojibwe Indians that great leaders' decisions are not always made for today but for children seven generations from now. And, God, we know that leadership is sometimes a lonely place, wisdom is often illusive and making the right choice can be hard but we pray that when burdened with difficult decisions our leaders will heed the God that lives within them and find the best that is in our humanity, draw from the best of our history and instincts and enlist the energy of our young. To all our world leaders we praise the God that lives within you. *Namaste*. Amen.

Senator Enzi: I am proud now to introduce our speaker, Ward Brehm. I knew him before I ever met him. I was involved in the United States AIDS bill and was headed to Africa to see what could be done. I was given a copy of a book called "White Man Walking," written by Ward, telling of his effort to get to know the people of a continent face to face, step by step. As I read about how the Lord used Africa to change his life it changed mine. Ward serves as the chair of the board of the United States Africa Development Fund, a small agency with a very big job—that of making micro investments across Africa that build people up through emerging private enterprise. Ward's wife, Chris, is here with us at the head table as well. After I read his book I got to work with his confirmation in the Senate. I then got to work with him to increase the agency's budget. He encouraged and was successful in getting countries to match the monies. He found customers for products made in Africa without going through middlemen. He has traveled to Africa more than 30 times. Each time he has a prayer and a scripture for each day of his journey and several of us join him in prayer from the United States as he makes a difference in Africa. Did you ever wonder what would happen if you allowed the Lord to really get a hold of your life and use you for His purposes? Here is a pretty good example of what happens when a great God gets a chance to use a regular person like you and me. Ladies and gentlemen, my friend, Ward Brehm.

Mr. Ward Brehm: Thank you, Senator Enzi. I am deeply humbled by your introduction and proud to be able to call you my friend.

Most of you were probably surprised when you picked up your program and saw a speaker you have never heard of before. I

want to tell you, you are not alone. One month ago, I sent in my registration to this breakfast and I was just hoping for a good seat. (Laughter)

My thanks also to the members of the Senate group for this opportunity. A good friend emailed me last night and said that if God was going to speak through me, I did not need to be nervous . . . God is the one who should be nervous! (Laughter)

My wife read to me from Scriptures last night that Jesus said when two or more gather in His name, He will be there. That is good enough for me!

My work has given me the high privilege of serving you, Mr. President, the American people, and above all, the poor in Africa.

The best way to help the poor is to help them not be poor anymore. The only way I know how to do that is through job creation, and the very best form of sustainable development is a steady paycheck.

It has been said that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime. But that is not the full story. If you want to eat for a lifetime, you need to own the pond.

So a bit of background . . . Despite that eloquent introduction, I am a recovering Type-A controlling businessman. I have been described even by people who like me as someone who is often wrong but seldom in doubt. I was a bit of a problem child growing up. In fact, my pastor since childhood, Arthur Rounner, recently referred to me as a ministerial long shot!

They say that if God wants to get your attention he will toss a little pebble into your life. If that doesn't work, He will throw a rock. As a last resort, He will heave a brick!

Africa was my brick. In 1994, Africa was not on my personal radar screen. In fact, the only significant thing on that radar screen was ME!

In the Los Angeles airport I bought a copy of Stephen Covey's book, *The Seven Habits for Highly Effective People*. I didn't buy it to learn anything, but just wanted to make sure that he got them all right. (Laughter)

I was intrigued by Covey's notion of paradigms: identical sets of facts can mean something totally different because of your world view.

Somalia was in the news at the time, and countless numbers of Africans were dying from starvation. I felt no real connection to this humanitarian crisis. My radar screen was full.

Paradigms usually change because of shock or trauma, but I wondered if it might be possible for someone to change their paradigm on purpose. I supposed that if I were to see people starving, it would change that paradigm and perhaps much more. The thought left me as quickly as it came.

But God sent me a reminder . . . One week later, I made one of my occasional stops at church . . . and my pastor, out of the blue, took me aside and said, "Ward, I'm going to Africa in two months, and I would like you to go with me."

I told him I couldn't believe the coincidence of his invitation given my recent reflections on Somalia. Then I said . . . "No!" (Laughter)

He looked at me in a strange way, and he said, "Would you at least pray about it?" I looked at him and said, "You're the pastor; YOU pray about it. I will THINK about it but suspect my answer will be." (Laughter)

He must have prayed hard . . . because two months later, I found myself in the Minneapolis airport with a ticket to Ethiopia in my hand. I was surrounded by (for the lack of a better word) church ladies. (Laughter) And they were hugging me . . . (Laughter) Then someone suggested that we pray before we departed, so I found myself outside Gate

8A, holding hands with a group of strangers. And as I stand here before the National Prayer Breakfast, I can honestly say I uttered my first heartfelt and sincere prayer . . . "Lord, don't let any of my clients see me!" (Laughter)

And then we flew twelve thousand miles to Africa, and a million miles from my comfort zone. I had the high privilege of having my heart broken. I saw poverty on an obscene level. Children with flies on their eyes and for the lack of a 50 cent medicine doomed to blindness, the emaciated faces of famine, families shattered by civil war. In Masaka, Uganda I held the hand of a 22-year-old mother as she died of AIDS and then turned to look directly into the faces of four brand new orphans.

I was an eyewitness. It put a face on the statistics. I always believed that those statistics were true, but now they become real. It got personal. . . .

More recently, I took a long walk with a warrior turned pastor friend, Lodinyo, deep into an unknown wilderness along the northern Rift Valley that divides northwest Kenya with Uganda. He took me to where they had never seen a person with white skin. When they first spotted me, they thought I was a ghost . . . a dead man walking. For a while, I thought they would be right.

I fasted for five days on this walk to experience real hunger, but had brought along protein bars in case of (as Lodinyo put it) an "emergency". At the end of this walk, I collapsed in a borrowed sleeping hut. When I awoke 13 hours later, I saw a little boy peeking through the door. While he was initially terrified, curiosity eventually got the best of him, and I noticed he was concentrating more on my stash of power bars than he was on me. He succeeded in snatching a bar, and immediately ran away. "Kids are the same everywhere," I thought, until I stepped outside the hut, and I found that little boy kneeling over his two-year old sister with a terribly distended stomach, feeding her tiny pieces of protein. . . .

Three months later, I was to learn that she died . . . another paradigm shift.

Now after more than 30 trips to Africa, the question that I have been asked more than any other by my African friends is "What do you pray for?"

Most of us among the affluent have too many things. Too much food, multiple cars, great health care, retirement, insurance . . .

It is only when things fall apart completely, and we are totally out of control that we feel totally dependent, and thus closest to God. Death, cancer, business failure, addiction, divorce, crises; these are the things that truly drop us to our knees.

All across the world, including America, things are continuously falling apart for the truly poor . . . They are always out of control, constantly living in crises mode, and thus dependent and faithful to God's own commandment that we love Him with all of our hearts. God is often all the poor have.

The leaders that God anoints are their only hope. And despite the often-horrific conditions that they live in, the poor are thankful for their very existence.

Scripture asks, "Hasn't God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the Kingdom?" Yes, He has. I have seen it with my own eyes.

The question that I am asked by most of my American friends is, "Why cross an ocean to help people when you need only cross the street, to help your own?" It is a great question, and the answer is, of course, that we need to do both.

Solzhenitsyn said that disaster is defined by two things: magnitude and distance. So a small disaster close to home or a huge disaster faraway, results in what he describes

as “bearable disasters of bearable proportion.” We have become too good at “bearing.” Our hearts should be broken by the things that break the heart of God.

Specifically in Africa, there are many far-away disasters of epic proportions. In 1994, in Rwanda, a country the size of Maryland, the political genocide claimed over 800,000 lives: 9,000 lives per day for 90 days. That is two World Trade Center disasters per day for three months.

Today, in Darfur, Sudan, 1.5 million homeless. Thousands terrorized, raped and killed. AIDS is killing 4,400 people per day in Africa, and even more are dying from curable malaria. Epic disasters of epic proportions, far from home for most of us. We have hundreds today right here in this room from all around the world, our neighbors this morning, who experience these epic disasters close to home.

I do want to say while I have the chance with the President sitting right here. Very few people are aware that due to President Bush's commitment and the resulting partnership with Congress there has been an absolutely historic four-fold increase in American assistance to fight poverty and AIDS in Africa.

In 2003 there were 50,000 Africans on Anti-Viral medication and today there are over 1.5 million. I have not met a SINGLE person who hasn't agreed with this high calling.

Proverbs the book of Wisdom says “speak up for those who can not speak for themselves and defend the rights of the poor and destitute.” You have been that voice and on behalf of the “least of these” in Africa as well as the collective American conscience, I want to say . . . “Thank you Mr. President.” (Applause)

Do you remember when Jesus was talking to His disciples, and asked them when He was hungry, why they didn't give Him any food, and when He was naked, why they didn't give Him any clothes? And the disciples said something like, “Lord, we never did any of those things to You.” I always thought (like most folks) that Jesus replied “Whenever you did this to the least of these, you did this unto Me.”

Except that's not what He said. What He said was, “When ever you did this to one of the least of these, you did this unto Me.”

How often do we forget the word “one.”

It changes the meaning of what Jesus said completely. In our quest to be helpful, we can rob the poor of their dignity. In order to be of any help to the poor, we need to understand them, we need to know them, and we need to love them. They are not a group. The poor is not a species. They are identical to us in their hopes and dreams. They love their families and long for a better life. The only difference is that they are poor.

And people don't suffer and die in groups. It is one at a time. And each one of those deaths leaves an identical wake of agony to what you and I and our families would experience.

So what are we supposed to do with all this? How does this fit with our world, so different and so far away? Frankly, I am not sure, but we do have some clues. Jesus said, “The poor will always be with you.” What an odd thing to say, especially coming from Him!

Jesus also said, “To whom much has been given, much will be expected.” So maybe this is a test of sorts. If so . . . how are we doing?

I have heard stories similar to mine of peoples' lives being changed: from orphanages in Russia to inner-city schools in Minneapolis, from the slums of Calcutta to remote medical clinics in the mountains of Afghanistan, from the streets of Washington, D.C., to wretched prisons in East Asia. Indeed, all

across the world people are answering Jesus' question, “Who is my neighbor?” And these people are finding themselves changed, engaged, and discovering meaning and relevance by being involved in things much bigger than themselves.

I believe that, deep down, most people would love to have God change their lives. Here's the thing: If asked, He will, every time, guaranteed. And while these changes may initially seem scary, they ultimately lay a foundation for a life lived on purpose rather than by default.

I will forever be indebted to Africa. Africa awakened me when I didn't even know I was asleep. I pray that everyone who seeks one will find a similar path.

I pray that each of you will find your own Africa. . . .

A few years ago my friend, Gary Haugen, asked me the most important question of all . . .

For those four orphans I was with in Uganda who watched their mother die of AIDS and were suddenly and completely on their own . . . For a twelve year old girl kidnapped and sold into slavery in rural India . . . For a single mom evicted and homeless on the streets of Washington, D.C. . . . For each one of them: What is God's strategy for letting them know that He's good?

For the mother in Ethiopia who sees her baby die of malnutrition—Why would she think God is good? And what is God's strategy for allowing her to know that He loves her?

The answer is astounding. The answer is . . . US!

Even more astonishing . . . He has no plan B. . . .

God bless you one and all. (Applause)

Senator Salazar: Thank you, Ward Brehm, for that inspirational message. Ladies and gentlemen and guests from around the world, it is my honor to introduce to all of you the President of our United States. We are delighted to see with President Bush his lovely and wonderful wife, Laura. (Applause)

For all of us gathered here today in Washington, D.C. we know that this is a funny town. If you only read the papers you would think the Democrats and Republicans simply never work together. The truth is since I first met the President several years ago we have had a friendship that has helped us work on issues that are important to our nation, including the issues of renewable energy and the issues of immigration reform. It is a friendship that is rooted in our shared love for our nation, our faith and our reverence for family. The President and I have spoken several times about the powerful impact that our fathers have had on our lives. Our dad's stories show how the American experience can send different people down different paths to fulfill truly the American dream. World War II inspired both of our fathers to don the uniform of their country. The American West inspired their love for open spaces and for the ranching traditions of our states. Their love of God inspired them to work long days in service to generations to come. And so here we are today, the President of the United States and a United States Senator from Colorado, bound by our service to our country, by our faith in humanity, and by our hope that we too will be heroes to our daughters as our fathers were to all of us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States of America. (Applause)

The President of the United States: Thank you all. Gracias, mi amigo. Thank you, friend. Laura and I are honored to join you all here for the 56th National Prayer Breakfast. There are a lot of reasons to pray and one of course is to strengthen us against temptation—particularly this morning, the temptation to stay in bed. (Laughter)

Obviously there are a lot of prayerful people here and I appreciate your warm welcome.

We have a lot of distinguished guests here today, members of Congress, military leaders, captains of industry. Yet at this annual gathering we are reminded of an eternal truth, when we lift our hearts to God we are all equal in His sight. We are all equally precious; we are all equally dependant on His grace. It is fitting that we gather each year to approach our Creator in fellowship and to thank Him for the many blessings He has bestowed upon our families and our nation. It is fitting that we gather in prayer because we recognize a prayerful nation is a stronger nation.

I appreciate Senators Salazar and Enzi. Thank you for putting this event on.

Madame Speaker, Leader Hoyer, Leader Blunt, thank you for being here.

I welcome the members of Congress. I appreciate the Heads of State who are here. Welcome to America, again.

I thank the members of the Diplomatic Corps who joined us. I appreciate the distinguished dignitaries, all the members of my cabinet—don't linger, get back to work. (Laughter) Admiral, thank you for your leadership. I am always proud to be with the members of the United States military. I thank the state and local officials. Ward, thanks for your remarks. Those were awesome. I guess that is a presidential word. I am proud to be here with Michael W. and Debbie, long time friends of our family. Thank you for lending your beautiful voice. Judge, I am not going to hold the Texas thing against you. (Laughter)

Every President since Dwight Eisenhower has attended the National Prayer Breakfast—and I am really proud to carry on this tradition. It is an important tradition, and I am confident Presidents who follow me will do the same. The people in this room come from many different walks of faith. Yet we share one clear conviction: We believe that the Almighty hears our prayers—and answers those who seek Him. That is what we believe; otherwise, why come? That through the miracle of prayer, we believe he listens—if we listen to his voice and seek His presence in our lives, our hearts will change. And in so doing, in seeking God, we grow in ways that we could never imagine.

And in prayer we grow in gratitude and thanksgiving. When we spend time with the Almighty we realize how much he has bestowed upon us and our hearts are filled with joy. We give thanks for our families, we give thanks for the parents who raised us, we give thanks for the patient souls who married us and the children who make us proud each day. We give thanks for our liberty and the universal desire for freedom that He has written in every human heart. We give thanks for the God who made us in His image and redeemed us in His love.

In prayer we grow in meekness and humility. By approaching our Maker on bended knee we acknowledge our complete dependence on Him. We recognize that we have nothing to offer God that He does not already have, except our love. So we offer Him that love and ask for the grace to discern His will. We ask Him to remain near to us at all times. We ask Him to help us lead lives that are pleasing to Him. We discover that by surrendering our lives to the Almighty we are strengthened, refreshed and ready for all that may come. In prayer we also grow in boldness and courage.

The more time we spend with God, the more we see that He is not a distant king but a loving Father. Inspired by this confidence we approach Him with bold requests, we ask Him to heal the sick and comfort the dying and sustain those who care for them. We ask

Him to bring solace to the victims of tragedy and help to those suffering from addiction and adversity. We ask Him to strengthen our families and to protect the innocent and vulnerable in our country. We ask Him to protect our nation from those who wish us harm and watch over all who step forward to defend us. We ask Him to bring about the day when His peace shall reign across the world and every tear shall be wiped away.

In prayer we grow in mercy and compassion. We are reminded in prayer that we are all fallen creatures in need of mercy. And in seeking God's mercy we grow in mercy ourselves. Experiencing the presence of God transforms our hearts and the more we seek His presence, the more we feel the tug at our souls to reach out to the poor and the hungry, the elderly and the infirmed.

When we answer God's call to love a neighbor as ourselves we enter into a deeper friendship with our fellow man and a deeper relationship with our Eternal Father.

I believe in the power of prayer because I felt it in my own life. Prayer has strengthened me in times of personal challenge. It has helped me meet the challenges of the presidency. I understand now clearly the story of the calm in the rough seas. And so at this final prayer breakfast as your President, I thank you for your prayers and I thank our people all across America for their prayers and I ask you not to stop in the year ahead. We have so much work to do for our country. And with the help of the Almighty we will build a freer world and a safer, a more hopeful, a more noble, America. God bless. (Applause)

Senator Enzi: Thank you, Mr. President for that prayer for our country. We thank you for your presence here. This is the 56th consecutive time that a President of the United States has been at the National Prayer Breakfast, a tremendous and important tradition. Ladies and gentlemen, we would ask that you please remain at your places as the President and First Lady take their leave of us. And we do thank you for your presence, Mr. President, and the faithful way that you strive to carry the burdens of our nation. I know all of us want to join in saying we will pray for you and for your spouse and for your family that the Lord will give you success in your efforts toward the common needs of all mankind, which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

God bless you, Mr. President and Mrs. Bush. (Applause)

Mr. Smith: (Sings) ["Amazing Grace"] (Applause)

Senator Enzi: Thank you, Michael for the gift of worship as you do it so well through song. We're very grateful for all at our head table, the participants and the loving, thoughtful spirit that they have shared with all of us. I know that when I leave today, I will take with me the prayers, the scriptures, the words of our two speakers and try to remember that the word "one" is the important part to the least and that we all have the opportunity to do our part. I hope that God doesn't get too nervous when He is working through us. This has been an outstanding morning. We have shared with you a little bit of what our Wednesday prayer breakfast is like, it is the way we get filled up during the week and I hope this has helped to fill you today.

Senator Salazar: We hope you have all been encouraged. We hope you have been challenged. We hope you take the faith and hope and optimism and challenges that Ward Brehm has presented to us here today that not only in Africa, but in Latin America and all across this world that we work for a more perfect world and I am sure that this prayer breakfast will help us move along the way. Thank you to the 4,000 people who are here,

to the millions around the world who are praying for us, to the 155 nations who are represented here knowing at the end of the day we are one human race. Thank you for coming this morning.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

PROGRESS IN IRAQ

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I want to take a few minutes to talk about the testimony given yesterday by General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker regarding our progress and challenges in Iraq. I think it is important for the American people to understand and for our colleagues to understand that the surge of troops in Iraq that began in the early part of last year was a corrective measure, and that from the fall of Baghdad until January 2007, it was clear to me, Senator McCain, and others that our strategy during that period of time was not working; that we had too few troops; that the country got into a lawless state; that political progress and economic progress was virtually nonexistent. There was a paralysis when it came to the ability to govern in Baghdad: The economy was stalled; violence was spreading throughout the country to the point, in 2006, that the al-Qaida flag flew over parts of Anbar Province.

So there was a moment of reckoning. The President had a decision to make after the Republican losses in November of 2006. It was widely held that the reason Republicans lost in the midterm elections was because of Iraq policy. Secretary Rumsfeld resigned and the President had a choice. One of the choices would have been to adopt the strategy of withdrawing at a faster rate, the theory being to put pressure on the Iraqi military and government to perform better because they were relying too much upon us. The other theory was that the security environment is so out of control and so tenuous that you will never have military, political, or economic progress until you get better control over security.

Well, the surge argument, advocated primarily by Senators McCain, Lieberman, and others, won the day with the President. So it was clear that we needed to change strategy at the end of 2006, and we did. There is an ongoing debate about whether that was the correct choice. To evaluate fairly the testimony of Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus, I think one has to look at what happened from January of 2007 up to today and planned out to July 2008.

During that period of time, there was a surge of American combat forces into Iraq of 30,000 additional combat troops. The security argument prevailed over the withdrawal argument. The troops were deployed in a significantly different way. Not only were there more of the troops, which was a requirement, General Petraeus came up with a new

strategy. He got the troops out into the communities, at security stations, where American soldiers served with Iraqi soldiers and policemen within the community. That built a sense of confidence we had not seen before. At the end of 2006, something very startling happened in Anbar Province. Sheikh Sattar, one of the young sheiks in the Anbar Sunni region, after part of his family was murdered by al-Qaida, came to an American colonel and said: We have had it, we want to fight with you. We want these guys out of Anbar. We don't want to be dominated by al-Qaida in Iraq. The commander seized the moment and put a couple of tanks around the guy's house. From that action by the colonel and the addition of combat forces, Anbar Province is a completely different place.

If you ask me what is the most successful event of all within the surge period of time, I would argue it is the uprising in Anbar Province by Iraqi Sunni Arabs against the al-Qaida presence in Anbar. They have rejected the al-Qaida agenda and joined forces with the coalition forces, American forces, and we have literally delivered a punishing blow to al-Qaida in Anbar Province—to the point now that Ramadi and Fallujah are some of the safest places in all of Iraq.

So for the American public to grasp what is going on here, I think you have to understand this one fact. When Arab Muslim people say no to al-Qaida and we will fight bin Laden, his agents, and sympathizers, that is a good day for America. That is what the war is going to be about conventionally, in terms of how we win. If the people in the Middle East turn on al-Qaida and they say no and shoulder the burden of fighting and create a community in place of al-Qaida's agenda that is more tolerant, more open, that will allow the Shia and the Kurds to live in peace; that will not try to pass on the al-Qaida philosophy and agenda to everybody surrounding the region. So this is incredibly good news from the surge, with the increased combat capability and the overplaying of al-Qaida's hand in Anbar; they were incredibly vicious to the people.

I have been to Iraq 11 times, and the stories that come out of Anbar Province while al-Qaida dominated the region are heart-breaking and bone-chilling. Now we have, in April of 2008, a completely changed Anbar Province, where we have over 90,000 Iraqis, called the "Sons of Iraq," patrolling their communities at night and during the day to make sure al-Qaida doesn't come back.

Iraq is a changed place in many ways. If you had to list the winners and losers of the surge, I argue that the biggest loser of all is the al-Qaida presence in Iraq. Any time al-Qaida is losing, we are winning. What has happened in that period of time? The economic progress in Iraq is real and is fundamentally different than it was before the surge. The reason I think we